

Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease and stroke are the principal components of cardiovascular disease (CVD). Although CVD is often thought to affect primarily men and older people, it is a major killer of women and people in the prime of life. **More than half of CVD deaths each year occur among women.**

Death statistics alone understate the burden of CVD. About 61 million Americans (almost one-fourth of the population) live with this disease.

In 2003, North Dakota received funds from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a State Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program.

"Too many of our friends and family members are affected by heart disease and strokes. Funding for cardiovascular disease will help us develop a program that focuses on prevention, which can significantly reduce heart attacks and strokes, as well as deaths and disability suffered as a result of these diseases."

- State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D., M.P.H.T.M.

Mortality

Heart disease and stroke are the first and third leading causes of death in the United States, accounting for more than 40 percent of all deaths.

In 2003, heart disease was the leading cause of death in North Dakota (26.9 percent of all deaths) while stroke (cerebrovascular disease) was the third leading cause of death (7.9 percent of all deaths).

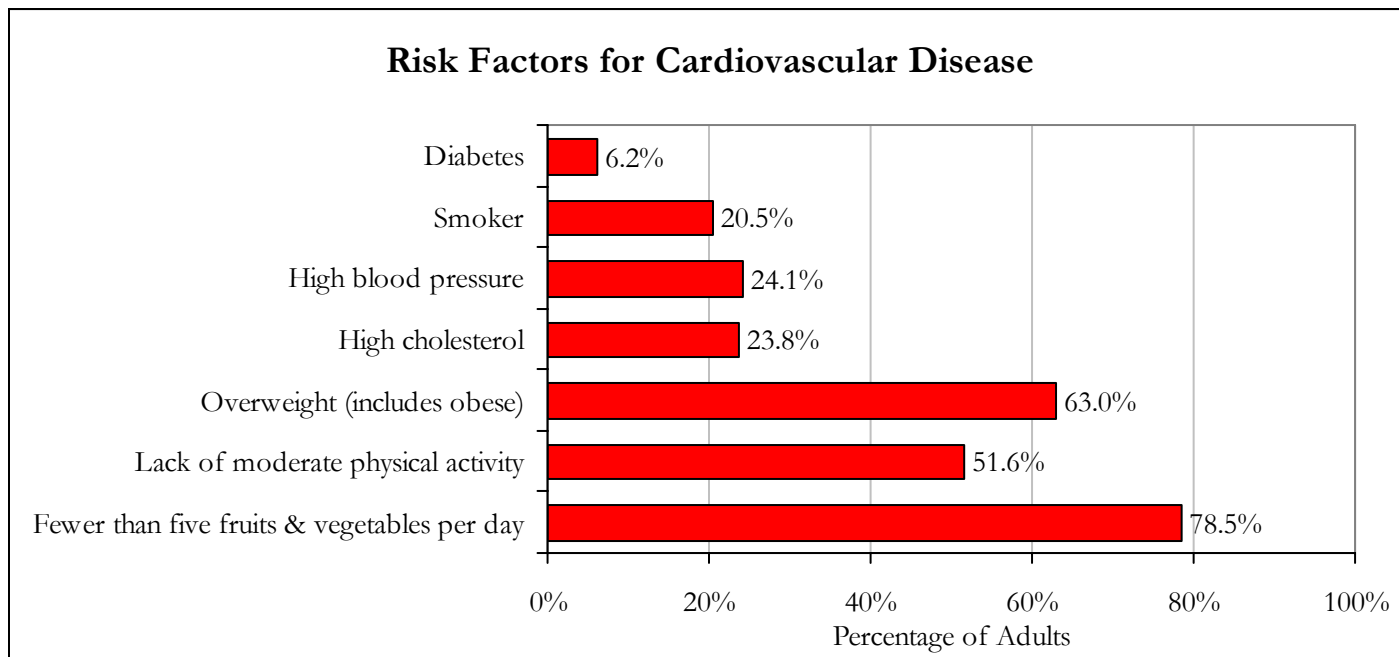
	Number of Deaths	Percentage of CVD Deaths	Percentage of All Deaths
Major Cardiovascular Disease	2,290	100.0%	37.8%
Diseases of the Heart	1,625	71.0%	26.9%
Primary Hypertension/Hypertensive Renal Disease	67	2.9%	1.1%
Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)	480	21.0%	7.9%
Atherosclerosis	48	2.1%	0.8%
Other Diseases of the Circulatory System	70	3.1%	1.2%

Risk Factors

The prevalence of risk factors among adults is measured by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), a statewide telephone survey of adults that includes several cardiovascular health related questions.

It is recommended that people work to eliminate the risk factors for CVD through increasing physical activity, improving dietary habits, maintaining a healthy weight and seeking help to quit smoking.

According to data from the 2003 BRFSS, **more than one-half of adults in North Dakota (52.8 percent) are living with three or more of the seven primary risk factors for CVD.**



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**Improving Health for
All North Dakotans**

The Cardiovascular Health Program seeks to improve cardiovascular health of North Dakotans by facilitating partnerships and coordination among concerned parties, monitoring critical aspects of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and developing effective strategies to reduce CVD and related risk factors with an overarching emphasis on heart-healthy policies and environmental changes.

The Cardiovascular Health Program is progressing on the development of a comprehensive plan to address CVD, including primary and secondary prevention and its accompanying risk factors such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, tobacco use, physical inactivity, nutrition and overweight and/or obesity.

Primary prevention of cardiovascular disease focuses on the areas of physical activity, nutrition, weight control and abstinence from tobacco through lifestyle changes.

Secondary prevention focuses on developing effective strategies to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease and improving the quality of care provided by the health-care system.